INTRODUCTION
THE ADMONITIONS IN GENERAL

Before examining in detail each one of Francis’s twenty-eight admonitions, I will consider general questions such as occasion and literary style. I advise my astute readers that they should return to this chapter after they have worked their way through all the admonitions to see whether they might want to consolidate or revise some of the opinions offered here.

The Occasion of Francis’s Admonitions

Let me give some opinions from various scholars who have studied the issue. Perhaps the most extreme opinion about the occasion of Francis’s Admonitions is that of Stanislao da Campagnola: “Concerning the origin and consequently concerning the chronology of all these spiritual themes the proposals suggested are of a purely hypothetical character.” Pierre Brunette (1989, 46) suggests that Francis composed the individual admonitions as instruction for the brothers gathered at community meetings. As far as the compilation of the admonitions into one body, Jérôme Poulenc (1962, 72) believes that with great probability he can situate them between Francis’s Letter to the Chapter and his Testament, “perhaps during his stay in Sienna six months before his death.” Lothar Hardick (1982, xiii) packs much into his paragraph of assessment:

It is impossible to say how or when exactly the Admonitions were first composed, but it is quite likely that they were not gathered together until after the death of the saint. It is known from the Legend of the Three Companions (XIV) and from other sources that, at the early general chapter meetings of the friars held at the Porziuncola near Assisi, St. Francis used to give “admonitions, corrections, and precepts” to the friars. These Admonitions, as they have come down to us, may be a collection of the sayings and exhortations given at these chapters, augmented by others given at other times. Paul Sabatier preferred to consider them notes of Cardinal Ugolino and St Francis left over from the
original draft of the Rule or not belonging to such a Rule. They should, however, be considered rather as a collection of words of advice given by Francis at various times during his life.

Finally, with regard to the dating of Francis’s Admonitions Regis J. Armstrong (1985, 411) says:

It would not be rash, therefore, to conclude that these twenty-eight admonitions come from the last six or seven years of Francis’s life, and, to be more precise, during that period when, according to his biographers, he seemed ever more eager to instruct his brothers of his understanding of the Gospel life.

How might we evaluate these opinions? I believe that that it is more probable that the compilation of Francis’s earlier admonitions into his Admonitions took place while he was alive and under his direction. As Poulenc (1962, 71) reminds us and as we will see for ourselves in the commentaries below, Francis’s characteristic leitmotif of the Good God, giving good gifts to all, links the individual admonitions together. It is easier to imagine Francis himself providing this leitmotif than some compiler after his death. When we ask about the occasion itself for this compilation, we stand on thin ice, for it is notoriously difficult to date exhortatory material. For such material, at its best, is timeless. Poulenc (1962, 72) suggests various disciplinary problems in the Order that called forth admonitions such as the third one about “obedience.” And Esser writes:

Since Francis hardly directs his words of admonition against theoretical trespasses but seeks to correct real and actual abuses in the communal life of his friars, the Admonitions, in their own way, show that the first Franciscan generation is not to be glorified unduly.

I conclude by dating Francis’s Admonitions somewhere between 1223 and his death in 1226 when Francis was consolidating his view of what his evangelical life meant. His two Rules give two views, his Admonitions another, and his Testament still another. Was it an outside force such as disorder in the Order that occasioned the writing of the
Admonitions? Or was it Francis’s desire to bring together what he had spoken on various occasions as a sort of mini-Rule on the model of what St. Stephen of Muret provided for his followers in his 122 maxims?

**Literary Form and Style of Francis’s Admonitions**

Martino Conti has helpfully located the literary form of Francis’s Admonitions in the Bible’s sapiential and exhortatory literature and in the Sayings of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. While Conti is certainly correct, I would accentuate more than he does the “traditional” character of this literature. For example, contemporary commentaries on the exhortatory materials of Romans 12:9-21 show to what extent Paul’s admonitions are dependent on similar and older materials in the Old Testament and in the teachings of Jesus. Further, I would underscore the fact that many of the topics Francis treats in his admonitions are also discussed in the rules of religious institutes and that these rules ground their teachings in exhortations from Sacred Scripture. Read, for example, the opening lines of the Prologue of St. Benedict’s Rule: “Listen, O my son, to the precepts of the master, and incline the ear of your heart: willingly receive and faithfully fulfill the admonition of your loving father.”

Moreover, we must remember that exhortatory literature does not have just one literary form, for there are sayings, stories, and questions as well as direct admonitions such as, “Do this, and don’t do that.” I give an example that might help us appreciate the diversity of “admonition” in Francis’s Admonitions. St. Stephen of Muret (c. 1052-1124), founder of the Grandmontine hermits in the wilderness of France, has been likened to one of the desert fathers. He wrote no Rule, but gave his followers 122 maxims (sententiae) that are arranged one after another like beads on a rosary. I invite my readers to compare Stephen of Muret’s Sententia XCIV with Francis’s Admonitions 1 and 26 that also deal with the Eucharist and with his Admonition 3.2 about the evangelical law of gaining life by losing it. Maxim 94 also provides an excellent example of Stephen of Muret’s characteristic dialogical style and provides a parallel to Francis’s style of arguing by sharp conclusions or “zingers”:
This might reasonably be said to one who wants to communicate: “Brother, do you wish to receive the Body of Christ? Do you also wish that God show himself totally to you? If you desire this, God is prepared that he might give himself totally to you according to this agreement, namely, that you in like manner show yourself totally to him, since you long to have him totally.” Consider also in your heart whether God requires anything extraordinary, because he says to you: ‘Give me yourself totally, and I will give you myself totally.’ And you, brother, will retain what you give to him, and it will be yours. Whatever you hold back and retain, not wanting to give it to him, will perish. For whoever loves his life, loses it, and whoever loses it, will gain it, as the gospel says.  

During the course of my commentaries on Francis’s Admonitions we will have ample opportunity to appreciate his literary style. At this point I whet your appetite for appreciating Francis’s literary and theological finesse by comparing how St. Bernard of Clairvaux constructs his sixth step of pride in his Liber de gradibus humilitatis et superbiae XV, 43 with how Francis constructs his nineteenth Admonition on humility. This comparison also introduces us to the very large question of the sources or parallels for Francis’s writings. In this instance I was introduced to that question by Kajetan Esser, who in a footnote at the end of his critical text of Francis’s Admonition 19 referred to Bernard’s Tractatus de gradibus humilitatis et superbiae. It seems that Esser refers to Bernard’s work as a “parallel” to Francis’s Admonition 19, not because they have identical words in common, but because they treat the same subject, namely, humility.  

The Sixth Step: Self-Conceit  
Sextus Gradus: De Arrogantia  

He believes what he hears, praises what he does, and to what he might intend he does not attend. He is oblivious to his intentions, while latching onto the opinions of others. He trusts himself more than others about everything, and about himself he trusts the opinion of others more
than his inner self. And the result is that now not only in words or in mere ostentation of good works he shows forth his piety, but also trusts in his inmost heart that he is holier than all. And he relishes whatever praise he receives and does not attribute it to the ignorance or kindness of the one praising him, but arrogantly takes it as his due.

Note in Bernard of Clairvaux’s sixth step his use of rhyme, e.g., the first sentence in Latin: “Credit quod audit, laudat quod agit, et quid intendat non attendit.” Note also how “believes/trusts” (credere) recurs throughout the passage for a total of four times; and how “praise” begins and ends the passage as an “inclusio.” Most importantly, throughout the passage there is a contrast between “intention” or “self-knowledge” and the “opinion” of others. Might the sixth step be called “self-deceit” as well as “self-conceit”?

Francis’s Admonition 19

1. Blessed is the servant, who does not regard himself better when he is glorified and exalted by men and women, as when he is regarded as vile, simple and despicable, 2. because how much a person is before God, so much that person is and no more. 3. Woe to that religious man, who is placed by others in a high position and through his own will does not want...
to climb down. 4. And _blessed is that servant_ (Matthew 24:46 and Luke 12:43), who not through his own will is placed in a high position and always desires to be under the feet of others.

Francis’s literary finesse in this Admonition is not of the same order as that of Bernard of Clairvaux in his “Sixth Step of Pride,” but it is nevertheless significant in its deceptive simplicity. As in previous Admonitions, Francis builds up his Admonition by comparisons and by a principle. The comparisons are found in verse 1: “when... as when” (“quando... sicuti”) and in verses 3-4 “woe... blessed” (“vae... Beatus”). Francis introduces the principle in verse 2, and it, too, is built up by a comparison: “Because how much a person is before God, so much that person is and no more.” Moreover, notice how Francis balances the beatitude in verse 1 with the beatitude in verse 4: “praised and exalted” and “in a high place.” Finally, note the twist in Francis’s spiritual logic as he contrasts verses 3 and 4 through the repetition of “of his own will” and the verbs “does not wish to come down?”/”always desires to be under.”

By now it should be crystal clear to my readers that the literary form and the literary style of Francis’s Admonitions are quite different from our normal way of speaking about spiritual issues. And at the risk of trying to clarify the unclear by the unfamiliar, I cite the wave of interest in the last years about the sayings of the desert fathers and mothers. I quote two sayings of Amma (Mother) Syncleta:

12. She also said, “It is dangerous for anyone to teach who has not first been trained in the ‘practical’ life. For if someone who owns a ruined house receives guests there, he does them harm because of the dilapidation of his dwelling. It is the same in the case of someone who has not first built an interior dwelling; he causes loss to those who come. By words one may convert them to salvation, but by evil behaviour, one injures them....” 26. She also said, “Just as one cannot build a ship unless one has some nails, so it is impossible to be saved without humility.”

To understand the message contained in these two sayings of Amma Syncleta readers have to twist their minds and look at reality differently,
both the reality outside themselves and inside themselves. I would suggest that Francis’s Admonitions function in much the same way. They are not sound bites to be gobbled down in one second, so that the reader can fast forward to the next sound bite for another quick spiritual fix. They are hearty morsels that need adequate chewing to release all their potential nourishment.

Francis’s Creative Borrowing

Granted the aforementioned similarities between St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Francis of Assisi on the subject of “humility,” my readers might be puzzling about the issue of plagiarism. Perhaps, we might agree that the texts of the Bible and of the Liturgy were in the “public domain” and that Francis could freely “borrow” from them. We might also agree that Popes and Bishops would be pleased if Francis spread their teachings word for word. But what about “stealing” ideas from authors of his own era such as Bernard of Clairvaux? In answering this question, we again familiarize ourselves with truths that we often forget—Medieval folks did things differently than we do, and we cannot make them subservient to our norms and preferences. Although speaking of exegetes, what E. Ann Matter says can be applied to writers like Francis as well: “But it is also standard procedure in medieval exegesis to draw on as many references as possible while acknowledging as few as necessary.”

In order to make this point clearer, I use the example of how Bernard of Clairvaux borrowed from Origen’s Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles in writing his own commentary. Jean Leclercq translates a small section from Bernard of Clairvaux’s Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles 74.5:

I admit it: the Word has come to me, many times. Often he has entered into me and sometimes I have not been immediately aware of his arrival; but I perceived that he was there and I remember his presence. Even when I had a presentiment of it, I could never have the sensation of the exact moment of his entrance or of his departure. Whence did he come into my soul? Where did he go when leaving it? How did he enter and leave? Even now I must confess that I do not know....
Then Leclercq goes on to provide a translation of the passage from Origen on which Bernard of Clairvaux depends:

As God is my witness, I have often seen the Spouse coming and resting in me and then leaving quite suddenly. And I could no longer find him whom I sought. Then I desired his return and occasionally he did come back; then, when he has thus appeared to me and allowed himself to be seized by my hands, he disappears again and once more I begin to search for him. This has happened many times….

And then Leclercq wryly concludes his comparison of these two commentaries with this explanation:

Even better than a comparison of the two translations, the Latin texts of these two confessions prove that Bernard drew his inspiration from Origen and used some of the very same expressions. As usual, however, he did not copy; he transformed his source and enriched it by his great literary talent.17

Leclercq’s protestation that Bernard of Clairvaux did not copy from Origin is confirmed by Matter, who notes:

Rather, originality is here the process of borrowing, re-working, using old material in new ways to show the imagination and talents of a given author. Medieval authors cited others as a subtle, but understood, form of respect. They did not distinguish between borrowing and the creation of new ideas. True creativity was often seen in the way disparate sources were conceived to fit together.18

As we will see in my commentaries of Francis’s individual admonitions, most of what Francis writes in them may not be original in the sense of never having been heard or read before. Francis’s originality, indeed, his creativity, lies in the way he has connected the traditional material at his disposal, so that it challenges his readers afresh. Through his creative interweaving of the biblical, liturgical, ecclesiastical, monastic, and spiritual legacies of his day into his twenty-eight Admonitions,
Francis became a new Abba for his followers in the thirteenth and even the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.  

Francis and His Collaborators

No one seriously doubts the authenticity of Francis’s Admonitions. But it is another issue to ask: Did Francis write all twenty-eight of them himself, especially granted their extensive use of monastic and ecclesiastical traditions? I answer this important question in a number of steps. First, we must confront what Francis says about himself as a “unlearned person.” In his Testament 19 he writes: “And we were unlearned and subject to all” (“et eramus idiotae et subjecti omnibus”). And in his Letter to the Entire Order 39 he writes:

I have offended [God] in many ways through my grievous fault especially in not having kept the Rule which I promised the Lord nor in having said the Office as the Rule prescribes, either out of negligence or on account of my sickness, or because I am ignorant and unlearned (“quia ignorans sum et idiota”).

In order to understand what Francis is saying in these two writings, we must state that it is patently obvious from Francis’s two autographs that he knew how to write and read Latin and thus was not really ignorant. Francis, however, was unlearned (idiota) if you compared him to the lawyers and theologians of his day. Schmucki surmises that Francis’s humility may be the reason he describes himself in such unflattering terms in his Testament and Letter to the Entire Order.

At a time when the general level of education was appallingly low, knowledge was a source of great power because it was the key to social privilege, political influence and wealth. His (Francis’s) repeated declaration that he was “simple” when he began his Fraternity, seems to demonstrate his predilection for the original unpretentious nature of his Order.

In brief, Francis’s two self-designations cannot be taken to mean that he couldn’t read or write, was dumb or a literary nincompoop.

Second, we must confront the issue of what it means to be an “author.” I approach this topic from a New Testament perspective, from the example of Bernard of Clairvaux, and from my own personal experience of
“ghost writing.” In New Testament studies Raymond E. Brown champions the position that John, son of Zebedee, stands behind the Gospel of John as its eyewitness and primary author, but that others, over a period of years, composed the Gospel as we know it today as they built upon and interpreted John’s foundational tradition. R. Alan Culpepper favorably talks about the “school” behind the Fourth Gospel. In Pauline studies it is common coin that Paul used secretaries to compose his genuine letters and that Silvanus, Timothy, and Titus were probably members of his composing team. Yet such distinctive theological themes as grace, faith, works of the law, Spirit versus flesh are Paul’s own. Further, with various nuances scholars generally argue that 1-2 Timothy and Titus are not written by Paul, but stem from members of Paul’s school writing after Paul’s death to hand on the Pauline legacy in changed circumstances. So New Testament studies may provide an analogy of how someone might be considered the “author” of a writing, even though he never put pen to papyrus or parchment.

It is well known that Bernard of Clairvaux had a principal secretary, Geoffrey of Auxerre, and that together they saw to an official collection of his letters. Jean Leclercq also suggests that Bernard may have had less control over his sermons, for notaries (secretaries) may have taken down his oral sermons, composed what they heard, and later submitted them, more or less for his correction. Leclercq goes on to describe what “dictation” (dictare) meant in the Middle Ages:

To “dictate” could thus refer to the successive stages of composition. First came the impressing on wax tablets of the first draft of a work; this was reread, corrected, and only then was the definitive version “noted” either by the author himself or, more frequently, by a professional “notary” who copied it over or took it down from dictation.

From this brief exploration of Bernard of Clairvaux as author we can draw a number of conclusions for Francis’s writing. Medieval authors needed and had secretaries, over whose work they had reasonable, but not sovereign control.

During the 1990s I served the Order of Friars Minor as General Councilor and had various experiences with “ghost writing.” I bring these to bear upon the discussion of Francis’s Admonitions as possible
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analyses and do so because my knowledge of this use of a “secretary” was real and not theoretical. The primary qualities in a “secretary” or “ghost writer” are the following: intelligence, trust, and understanding of the “author’s” vision and approach to governance. After “the author” and the “secretary” got to know one another and the author began to trust the secretary, the secretary would be given fairly free reign to write the author’s letters. By reading and signing these letters, the author made them his own, and they were issued under his signature and seal. At times the author would call in an outside expert, share his vision with him, and give him specific points to cover in an “encyclical.” The draft of the “encyclical” would be presented to the author and his council for positive and negative critique. At this stage, unless the draft were worthless, only minor changes were made. And even individual reports, written by different people for the author, were molded into one report by a secretary, who knew well the vision and directives of the author. After some positive and negative criticisms this report became authoritative once the author signed it and affixed his seal to it.

Having said all this about “secretaries” and “ghost writers,” I must confess that at times the polymath and polyglot author wrote his own letters, reports, and major addresses. So what is my analogy? I have little difficulty imagining Francis giving specific instructions to a “secretary” about an admonition on “humility” or perhaps giving a secretary a rough draft of an admonition about “love of one’s enemies.” To the secretaries’ finished products Francis could give his blessing and thereby become their author. At the same time, this analogy does not prevent Francis from “dictating” the admonition all on his own after various rewrites on a wax tablet.

At this point, my position is not far removed from that of Stanislao da Campagnola:

...Francis must have written very little with his own hand. Like the great majority of people in the Middle Ages he preferred to dictate and avail himself of a secretary-scribe.... Recourse to a scribe...does not mean that he could not have participated with vigilant oversight in the redaction of the texts he dictated.... Undoubtedly he understood Latin even if he did not possess the wherewithal to express himself in it correctly and even less to write it correctly....He did not always suggest the definitive expression of an idea, but gave his ideas to a secretary who could
arrange them, put them into written form, and eventually supply the biblical, patristic, and monastic “authorities.”

I would differ from da Campagnola, however, in his explanation of how “the biblical, patristic, and monastic ‘authorities’” became part of the finished product. My personal experience is that these “authorities” must be part and parcel of the first draft and cannot be effectively added at a later stage. And my analyses of the vast majority of Francis’s Admonitions will bear me out, for their “authorities” can only be separated from the admonition by destroying it completely.

**My Approach and the Various Lives of Francis**

I have rarely called upon the testimony of the various lives of St. Francis of Assisi in my commentaries on Francis’s Admonitions. I have been content to interpret Francis by means of non-Franciscan spiritual traditions and by his own writings. I found the analogy for this methodological approach in the contemporary New Testament scholarly approach to the Acts of the Apostles as a source for the life and teaching of St. Paul. Only when the twenty-eight chapters of Acts corroborate what we know from Paul’s genuine letters, do we bring them in as sources. Thus, for example, when I treat Francis’s use and knowledge of Sacred Scripture, I do not cite as evidence the story of Francis’s extraordinary interpretation of a passage of Ezechiel for a Dominican Doctor of Sacred Theology. Thomas of Celano, in his Second Life of Francis 103, concludes this story: “That man, therefore, went away much edified, and he said to the companions of the blessed Francis: ‘My brothers, the theology of this man, based upon purity of life and contemplation, is a soaring eagle; but our learning crawls on its belly on the ground.’” The literary form Thomas of Celano employs is a well-worn one and found in Athanasius, *The Life of Saint Antony* #72-80 and in John Cassian’s *Conferences* V, 21. I put no credence in the historicity in these stories of “from simplicity to intellectual prowess.” Further, Thomas of Celano may be conveying a certain anti-intellectual bias by means of this story. On the other hand, from the evidence of the two existing manuscripts written in Latin in Francis’s own hand, I would judge accurate what Bonaventure in his *Legenda Major* 15.5 and Thomas of Celano in his First Life 23 say about Francis’s education: he learned to read and write as a youngster in the primary school of San Giorgio.
In conclusion, I have followed the traditional approach of writing my Introduction after I have completed my study. As I suggested earlier, my readers would be well advised to return to this Introduction on general matters after they have studied the specifics of the individual admonitions. To that happy task we now proceed.

Endnotes

1“Introduzione,” in Fontes Franciscani, 19.
2Kajetan Esser, Origins of the Franciscan Order (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970), 247 expresses this leitmotif differently: “Thus the Admonitions of St. Francis are the Magna Charta of a life in the Christian spirit of brotherhood, which is firmly rooted in a life of sublime poverty.”
3How does one provide the occasion for such admonitions as “Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer…. Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good” in Romans 12:12, 21? On the other hand, Admonition 26 surely finds its occasion in Francis’s era.
4Origins of the Franciscan Order, 269 n. 216.
8Webster’s New World Dictionary (New York: Pocket Books, 1995) defines zinger thus: “Something with a zing, as a retort, punch line, etc.”
10See Esser (1978, 75): “Cfr. S. Bernardus, Tractatus de gradibus humilitatis et superbiae, Cap. XV, n. 43 et Cap. IV, n. 14: PL 182, 966A et 949C.” The editorial heading for Admonition 19 is “Concerning the Humble Servant of God” (“De humili servo Dei”). And Bernard is acceding to a request that he write a text for novices on the twelve steps of humility (see St. Benedict’s Rule, VII). Bernard, in his own inimitable way, discusses, instead, the steps of pride. In Bernard’s schema the Sixth Step of Pride is equal to Benedict’s seventh step of humility, “To believe and admit that one is less than others.”
11To what extent Francis “borrowed” from Bernard of Clairvaux or others will occupy much of our time in our commentaries on the individual admonitions. See below for the brief introduction I give to this topic under the rubric of “Francis’s Creative Borrowing.”
12SB60 3.49-50.
13See Esser (1978, 75).
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16 Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian Spirit, Cistercian Studies Series 16 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1976), 74. Since Leclercq does not provide the Latin, I supply it from SBOp 2.242: “Fateor ut mihi adventasse Verbum—in insipientia dico—, et pluries. Cumque saepius intraverit ad me, non sensi aliquoties cum intravit. Adesse sensi, afflusisse recordor; interdum et prae sentire potui introitum eius, sentire nunc quam, sed ne exitum quidem. Nam unde in animam meam venerit, quove abierit denuo eam dimittens, sed et qua introierit vel exierit, etiam nunc ignare me fateor....”

17 Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian Spirit, 74 for both the translation of Origen and comment thereon. E. Ann Matter, The Voice of My Beloved, 39 makes these observations concerning the dependence of Bernard of Clairvaux on Origen: “Helmut Riedlinger has shown fourteen instances of thematic dependence. Other parallels can be added: discussion of the books of Solomon, identification of Solomon as the Peaceful One, the place of the Song of Songs in biblical canticles as indicated by its superlative title, the interpretation of the opening verse ‘let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth,’ and the fact that Bernard’s eighty-six homilies go only four verses beyond the Latin texts of Origen’s interpretations.”

18 The Voice of My Beloved, 6. St. Bernard “copied.” And there is evidence that St. Thomas Aquinas also “copied.” Writing about Lauda, syon, Aquinas’s masterful sequence for the Mass of Corpus Christi, Rubin (1991, 192) notes: “Borrowing from the Victorine tradition, Lauda, syon uses the Easter hymn Zyma vetus expurgatur of Adam of St. Victor (c. 1100-c.1180), borrowing phrases but altering its structure....” And as we will have occasion to notice in what follows, St. Francis also “copied.” Can three canonized saints have done something wrong?

19 Armstrong (1985, 406-7) points to Francis as a “Desert Father” from two interrelated angles: the meaning of the term “admonition”; the manuscript tradition. “While contemporary translations tend to interpret moneo, admoneo, or commoneo as reproach, warn, reprimand, or admonish, that is, as an act of cautioning, advising, reproving or warning, the more accurate way of capturing its meaning would be to accentuate the more religious characteristics of recalling the teaching of Jesus, his gracious interventions in history, or various aspects of religious observance. A few manuscripts simply entitle this collection of twenty-eight writings ‘Sayings’ or ‘Words,’ but the majority of collections, including the Assisi Codex 338, classifies them as ‘words of sacred admonition’ or, more simply ‘the admonitions.’ In both manuscript traditions, however, we are confronted with writings that resemble the teachings of the wise masters of the primitive monastic traditions that formed part of the sacred heritage of the religious world. No doubt the early amanuenses of the franciscan tradition viewed these religious reminders of Francis in much the same light and were eager to preserve them in much the same manner as their monastic forebears.”


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26"Introduzione," in Fontes Franciscani, 6-8.
27Omnibus, 447.

28See Oktavian Schmucki, “St. Francis’s Level of Education,” Greyfriars Review 10 (1996): 153-170, esp. 154-59. Schmucki, however, may be going beyond the evidence of Francis’s autographs. There are too many “provided thats” in what he writes on p. 158: “Because of the education he had received, incomplete though it was, and his lively intelligence, Francis was able to read biblical and other texts written in the ecclesiastical Latin of his time and to understand at least their general meaning. It is also possible that he was able to pick his way through the works of church authors provided that they were not written in difficult Latin or in abstruse theological language and provided also that he had an adequately educated companion to help him.”